

Alexander Dugin: Between Eschatology, Esotericism, and Conspiracy Theory

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1 Introduction

Alexander Dugin is a remarkable figure in the dull Russian political scene, and his ideas have already been analysed by a number of scholars. Some have noted his sympathy towards fascism (Luks 2000; Shenfield 2001: 191–194; Mathyl 2003; Umland 2008, 2009, 2010) others emphasise his Eurasian orientation (Bassin 2008), and still others point to his geopolitical ideas (Dunlop 2001; Ingram 2001; Wiederkehr 2004; Parland 2005: 103–116). Some authors, while acknowledging his fascist inclinations, underline Dugin's evident proximity to the European New Right (Shekhovtsov 2009a, 2009b), and some have focused on his esoteric (or traditionalist) interests (Sedgwick 2004: 221–237). Finally, certain scholars have tried to cover all his various concepts in general (Laruelle 2006, 2008: 107–144; 2015a). Yet, one of his passions has attracted far less attention: conspiracy theory. Dugin was obsessed with the topic, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and continued to develop relevant ideas over the next ten to fifteen years.

Dugin is very dynamic and innovative and, in his behaviour, is less conservative by contrast to the image of himself he is creating in his publications. Over time, he presented himself as either a member of the SS Black Order, or an occult scientist, or Old Believer, or Eurasianist, or a political scientist, or finally, a sociologist.¹ Dugin's interest in conspiracies does not focus simply on local plots, but on an all-embracing world plot to introduce the “New World Order” and establish a “World Government” (Dugin 2005: 21; Bagdasarian 1999a: 4–5; 1999b: 108; Entin 2000: 70; Hagemester 2003: 86). While developing this approach, Dugin treats conspiracy as an outcome of a sharp break with

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1 For Dugin's rather complicated career from “non-malignant fascism” to assistance for the Russian politicians, see Moroz 2002 and Umland 2010. For an apologetic article, yet with interesting lesser known facts and evaluations, see Diunov 2008.

religious dogmas that occurred in the Enlightenment (Dugin 2005: 22–23). Yet, in my view, conspiracy theories are a way to sneak these dogmas back in, and maintain them in the ‘Era of Reason’, although in modified shape (Entin 2000). Indeed, Dugin himself points to a “sacral background of conspiracy.”² Evidently, conspiratorial constructions represent the plot’s objectives in a way that resembles the numerous comments on Apocalypse. For example, Dugin emphasised that his favourite thinker René Guénon warned that the time of the Antichrist was about to come. Moreover, in his interpretation, Guénon believed that the Antichrist would appear from the “tribe of Dan,” and thus came to a conclusion on the ominous role of the Diaspora Jews allegedly aspiring to build “Hell on Earth” (Dugin 2005: 73–74, 78–79). Another favourite author, Miguel Serrano, believed in the Masonic-Jewish world plot and argued that the Jews did all their best to undermine traditional world order to enthrone the Antichrist (Goodrick-Clarke 2002: 185).

All these theories predict the establishment of a ‘World Government’, the introduction of a uniform religion and the elimination of Christianity together with traditional cultures and nation states. Richard Hofstadter has already pointed to the apocalyptic style of thinking among those who share this approach (Hofstadter 1965: 29–30; Barkun 2003: 7–8). Indeed, conspiracy has become a secular version of the Apocalypse, which maintained many approaches that were developed in the Christian world for centuries (Barkun 2003).

Apocalyptic events are what mostly alarms and what is inevitably expected by admirers of eschatology. It is no accident that nowadays conspiracy is mostly represented by the Christian fundamentalists, who share very conservative views. In fact, their ‘secular ideas’ reproduce the same dogmas in different terms, which better fit modern times. Therefore, it is no wonder that conspiracy is rooted in discussions of the end times and the Antichrist’s arrival. Some conspiracy theorists, including Dugin, acknowledge this fact (Dugin 2005: 5, 115–116). Moreover, eschatological images are more evident in Dugin’s constructions, who presents himself as a ‘traditionalist’ than in the reasoning of many other Russian conspiracy thinkers. Indeed, it is in his books that one can easily find such eschatological images as both the Devil and “Prince of This World,” together with the Antichrist and his “agents” (Dugin 2005: 28–29, 117–119). The views of apocalypse popular in Russia identify the adherents of the Antichrist as the Jews, with reference to Church Fathers (Derevensky 2000: 21–24). That is why an image of the Jews as the organisers of various plots aimed at the

2 Besides Christian eschatology, one has to consider a rich tradition of Demonology, which included an idea of demonic agents that want to tempt people by any mean. See Bagdasarjan 1999c.

destruction of traditions is very popular in these conspiracy theories. Indeed, the early conspiracy theorists were mostly alarmed at the elimination of Christianity, which allegedly was one of the plot's major goals. This is an evident heritage of eschatology with its expectation of the misfortunes brought about by the Jews as though they did their best to prepare the Antichrist's arrival.

The "Jewish plot" still alarms many Russian conspiracy thinkers (Shnirelman 2018). They have developed a particular language, which includes a set of terms and notions expressing fears about secret societies and ominous plots aimed at Russia. This development was launched partly by the books of the Western conspiracy theorists that were intensively translated and published in Russia during the last 20 to 25 years (for details, see Shnirelman 2015b). Most of the Russian conspiracy theorists dwelt on their Anglo-American predecessors and teachers and borrowed extensive lists of secret societies from them.³ By contrast, Dugin is based mainly on the French tradition of conspiracy,⁴ which, compared to the more widespread Anglo-American current, provided his ideas with a flavour of 'originality'. His 'plot theory', which inevitably grew up from the ideas of the end times, has found its manifestation in TV programmes and publications with his active participation. In 1993, he and Iu. Vorobievsky took part in the TV project *Secret of the Century*, where they scared the TV audience with a treacherous world plot allegedly organised by the "Kike-Masons." To be sure, they did not fail to refer to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The radical-right message of this project caused its closure in 1993.

While considering the 'world plot', Dugin bases himself either on esoteric, conspiracist, or geopolitical approaches. Respectively, he suggests three different approaches, which hardly agree with each other. As a result, a reader would be confused and cannot see what he/she is suggested to follow. Yet, this is of no concern to Dugin, because, in my view, emotions are more important for him than reason, and he values irrationality above rationality. His goal is to stir up a highly emotional consumer response to the particular enemy whom he points to. With this in mind, logic proves to be irrelevant. An intensity of fear, which is infused by a particular representation of the plot issue, is what is important. Stretches and fantasies, which distort information or its meaning, are used for that. In this respect, he perfectly fits a tradition of "improvisational millennialism" defined by Michael Barkun as an "act of bricolage"

3 For example the books of Douglas Read, Anthony Sutton, Ralph Epperson, and John Coleman, which were published in Russia.

4 His most favourite authors are certainly Alain de Benoist and Jean Parvulesko. He has borrowed an idea of a struggle between the 'Two Orders' from the French Mason C. Boucher who visited Moscow in 1993. For this, see Vorobievsky 2011: 33.

(2003: 10). It is no accident that Dugin prefers to refer to fictions rather than to scholarly production. In this, Dugin readily follows his tutors from the Western New Right. Therefore, all his ideas and constructions prove to be derivative and secondary.⁵

2 Dugin's Early Career

Dugin's first steps in conspiracy were connected with the radical *Day* newspaper; since then he has published extensively on the issue (see, for example, Okhotin 1991; Dugin 1991a, 1993).⁶ Whereas in the early 1990s he was serious about the "Great war of the continents," ten years later he called conspiracy a "joyful post-modern science" (Dugin 2005). In his preface to the second edition of his book on conspiracy (2005) he viewed it as a continuation of the medieval myths of the "dark forces" and "Devil's intrigues," which were now used outside of a religious context (Dugin 2005: 5).⁷ He described it with certain irony and defined conspiracy as "admirable chaos and fascinating delirium." Yet, an irony immediately disappeared when he gave an account of his own conspiratorial concepts. Although he promised to "analyze conspiracy as a sociological and cultural phenomenon, as a conceptual syndrome of post-modernity" (Dugin 2005: 10), a reader would come across the same intricate conspiratorial constructions rather than any in-depth analysis. Indeed, Dugin dislikes "historical positivism" because it fails to provide a desired space for his bizarre conclusions. To be sure, he is right in that an "excessive and uncritical admiration with conspiratorial subjects is pregnant with intellectual degradation" (15).⁸ Surprisingly, he himself does not follow this wise warning. Indeed, his imagination of America as the "Green country of dead," which he directly associated with the "country of Apocalypse" and called for "closing" it to fulfil some "religious obligation" (368; article originally from 1989), sounded as a voice from the Middle Ages.

5 For the New Right ideas that make up a basis for his constructions, see Martines Otero 2008: 161–167. And for his contacts with the Western New Right see Clover 2016: 174–181, 203–204.

6 The book *Konspirologia* (1993) has been republished as an extended version (Parts 2, 3, 4, 5 and the first section of Part 6 were added) under the title *Konspirologia (nauka o zagovorakh, sekretnykh obshchestvakh i tainoi voine)* (2005). Its is noteworthy that Dugin felt uncomfortable with his former occult interest in the new environment, and has made respective changes in the title (an "occult war" was replaced with a "secret war").

7 This preface was absent in the first edition because at that time Dugin was very serious with respect to conspiracy.

8 For that, see Mosionzhik 2012: 99–101.

While discussing conspiracy, Dugin used such Jungian psychoanalytical terms as “unconscious archetypes,” “collective unconsciousness,” and “unconscious energy” without making any special sociological or anthropological surveys. He discussed an “archaic state of certain groups of people” being unfamiliar with these “groups” or “people” in general. “Orthodox religious mystics” were his ideal, and it is with them, and mostly their literary production, rather than with “people” that his discussions of conspiracy deal with. And it is no accident that he reveals close ties between conspiracy and “traditionalists.” In his view, it was traditionalists such as himself who could openly demonstrate what was veiled in the conspiracy thinkers’ constructions, namely, a “logic of sacral history,” allegedly following a “rule of degradation” (Dugin 2005: 24–26).⁹

In his book Dugin provides a whole list of various plots, including a “mason plot,” a “Jewish plot,” a “bankers’ plot,” a “Bolshevik plot,” a “mondialist plot,” and a “sects’ plot.” He does not fail to refer to such, in his view, “outstanding” Russian pre-revolutionary conspiracy theorists as A. Shmakov, A. Selianinov, G. Schwarz-Bostunich, and—to be sure—Sergei Nilus (Hagemester, this volume). Yet he associates them with an ‘anti-Mason line’ and keeps silent about their furious anti-Semitism. Moreover, having distanced himself from conspiracy theorists and warned against blind belief in their ideas in his preface, further on he emphasised what he called a serious nature of a “conspiracy science.” He argued that it has to occupy a “central place in [the] contemporary historical field” because it discovers “sacral truth,” and in contrast to scholarly concepts, its views are informed by “true and authentic tradition,” by which Dugin meant religious teachings (Dugin 2005: 53–54). To put it differently, what was called “occult science” earlier, now enjoys a position within “conspiracy science.”

Dugin goes so far as to enumerate “mysteries of Russian history” shaped by his own fantasy and suggests that conspiracy theorists have to study them. At this point he demonstrates a motivation for his interests: it appears that the goal of the analysis of conspiracy is not its critique, but a study of the accumulated experience for its further usage because, as he claims, history is nothing without conspiracy (Dugin 2005: 126–128). Moreover, in his view, it is impossible to understand the nature of the contemporary world without “competency in metaphysics and Tradition.” Allegedly, scholarship cannot help because the ‘world plot’ is a “living issue of contemporary geopolitics.”

9 It is noteworthy that here Dugin is following the esoteric rather than Christian view of history because he is talking not about the “end of time” that has to terminate with the Last Judgment, but about the end of the “pulsing cycle” that has to result in a “reintegration,” that is, a sudden emergence of the new Golden Age. For these ideas see Shnirelman 2015a.

While making a survey of the conspiracy theorists' teachings (those of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, René Guénon, Miguel Serrano, Jean Robén, Jean Parvulesko), Dugin demonstrates that they lacked methodology besides "intuition" and "insight." Therefore they used to interpret the same data in different and sometimes opposing ways and provide arbitrary timescales. Indeed, their "anti-positivist" science did not need any verification. The most important issues were geographical directions, colour symbolism, lunar and solar cults, religious doctrines, secret languages, initiation, and secret societies rather than economics, social structure, or real history. Dugin glorified the genius of his predecessors and was fascinated with their "insights." He himself was obsessed with binary oppositions and believed that a key to the nature of any ideas and movements was in their division into such oppositions. And he presented all this lip service as an "analysis."

The Book of Revelation of Saint John the Divine made up the very basis of Dugin's view of history. He identified the promised "Millennial Kingdom" with Russia, where, by contrast to the West and Byzantium, an arrival of the "Son of Death" was delayed (Dugin 2004: 229–232). While following eschatological ideas, Dugin provided *katechon*, or "he who now restrains" (11 Thess. ii 7), with a key role in the Christian politics and philosophy as though it was saving the world from the Antichrist (223). Initially, he identified this agent with either the "God-bearing Russian people" or Russia itself, which he identified with the "Soviet Empire." In 1992 he claimed that *katechon* has lost its power after its dissolution. Yet he believed that this misfortune would not last long because allegedly Russia was "not from this world" and Jesus Christ was still its God, which promised a fast regeneration (Dugin 1992). To be sure, all these ideas were heresy from the theological point of view.¹⁰

Dugin never came back to these ideas again. Instead, he has focused on a history of Christianity and made an attempt to depict a process of transmission of the *katechon* mission from Byzantium to Russia. He claimed that after the Council of Florence (1438–1439) and the fall of Constantinople (1454), Byzantium has lost its *katechon* role, and the enthroning of the Antichrist has started. Ever since, Orthodox Rus' has become the 'elected kingdom' for a short period because both an independent state and Christian faith survived there, and the *katechon* function was transmitted to the Russian tsar. At the same time, while associating himself with Old Believers, Dugin maintained that the "true end of times" began in 1666 after the Church Congress, when Rus' moved

10 The Russian Orthodox authors did not find any Orthodoxy in Dugin's publications. For example, see Bulychev and Afonina 1993; Shumsky 1994: 15; Averianov 2003: 257–273; Riabinin 2009: 108–110, 366.

towards a “secular Empire.” In his view, this was a result of a “Devil’s obsession” and “metaphysical Russophobia” instigated by some hostile agents. After the Congress, Holy Rus’ has disappeared, and an epoch of apostasy began. For Dugin, the apocalyptic period began in the late seventeenth century, and it is from this point of view that he interpreted all subsequent history up to the present day (Dugin 1997a). It is worth noting that this particular approach was developed by the Old Believers from the late seventeenth century onwards (Gurianova 1988: 19, 33–35).

3 “Occult Metaphysical War”

Eschatology still informs Dugin’s imagination. In the early 1990s he realised that we lived in the end times, and ten years later he discovered a source of misfortune; it appeared that the American neoconservatives (‘neocons’) were consciously driving humanity to the “Kingdom of Antichrist” (Dugin 2005: 434–455).

While viewing the world history in an apocalyptic way, Dugin reveals there an everlasting antagonist “occult metaphysical war” between Christianity and Judaism (Dugin 1997b: 229–230). He discovers in the Kabbalah *Book of Zohar* of the thirteenth century, a plot aimed not only at the Christians but at all peoples throughout the world as though the Jews were preparing a “ritual genocide” for them.¹¹ Allegedly, this has to happen before the Kingdom of the Messiah would come into being. Dugin is searching for the omens of the end times and reveals them in the restoration of the State of Israel. According to his calculations, the Messiah had to arrive in 1990. It was Dugin who brought to Russia a rumour that the ‘ninth red cow’ had been born in March 1997, after which the tenth one had to appear, which would be used for a sacrifice for the Messiah. Allegedly, the Jews would be permitted to enter the Temple Mount after that (Dugin 1997c).¹² Dugin’s predictions failed to come into fruition in the 1990s. Yet, he is not embarrassed and once again claims that we live in the end times, and expects an arrival of the Antichrist (Dugin 2018).

In the early 1990s, Dugin claimed that at this period a struggle between Christianity and Judaism that was also a struggle between the ‘Aryans’ and the

11 In fact, Dugin represented a fragment of the Roman Catholic priest I. Pranaitis’ accusatory talk at the “Beilis trial” of 1911–13 when the Jew was falsely accused of ritual murder.

12 This information arrived from the Jewish fundamentalists who talked of the preparations for a restoration of the Third Temple in Jerusalem. See Wright 1998. For that issue also, see Ariel 2002.

Judeo-Masons', had to escalate. He believed that nowadays there was a struggle between two occult Orders at the eve of the end times, when the Jews supported by the Vatican were establishing their 'New World Order', that is, an order of the 'Lunar Kingdom', which means their dictatorship over the goyim. Dugin viewed himself as one of a few defenders of the 'Solar ideology', which stood against the 'Judeo-Masonic World Republic'. It is noteworthy that he finished his reasoning with an expression of his belief in the final victory of the North over South, that is, the "White people against the Semites." It was no accident that he presented the 'Nordic swastika' as a symbol both of Aryanism and of Christianity. In this context it looked as an indispensable element of the struggle against the "Jews" identified as the "Semites" (Dugin 1997b). To put it differently, Dugin's eschatology appears a replica of the Nazi prototype.¹³ It is worth noting that in the early 1990s, Dugin was issuing the journal *Elementy*, which glorified the German right wing of the Weimar period and fostered eschatological notions. While furiously attacking liberals, it called them "mondialists" and ascribed to them an aspiration to welcome the Messiah. Its authors were fascinated with the SS officers and demonstrated their sympathy towards the Nazis, although the latter were criticised for their "mistakes" (Luks 2002: 276–284).

Dugin's book on conspiracy included his articles of more than ten years. For an attentive reader it is evident that the author's views changed with almost every new book he read. However, a development of a new concept never resulted in throwing away an earlier one. For example, after Dugin read a book by the Eurasian Yaakov Bromberg (1931) in the mid-1990s, he stopped considering all the Jews the "enemies of humanity." Instead, he has constructed two groups being on terms with each other, namely the conservative Hassidim, whom he viewed as the allies of the Eurasians, and the secular assimilated Jews, the Westernisers, whom he stubbornly treated as the enemies (Dugin 1997d).

Yet, this idea entirely contradicted his conspiratorial concept of 1992, when he associated Judaism as such with the ruinous 'creationism'—indeed, whereas secular Jews proved to be outside this tradition, the Hassidim, that is, 'creationists', were depicted as 'allies'. Nonetheless, in the second edition of the book, Dugin went so far as to suggest several contrasting views of the Jews, shaped by him in various periods. On the one hand, he ascribed some "uniform psychotype" to all the Diaspora Jews. On the other hand, the book contained his article of 1991, where "Zionism" was separated from the evil "mondialism," whose

13 In one of his articles, Dugin claimed that his beloved "conservative revolution," with its Russophile and imperial stance, differed from national-socialism. Yet, it seems that he did not find any differences between them in their attitude towards Jews, and he had nothing against this attitude. See Dugin 1991b.

followers were the Jews, who did not share the ideas of “Zionism” as “local nationalism” (Dugin 2005: 334–337). At the same time, a reader would be confused with his idea of 1996, when he has constructed an opposition of the conservative Hassidim (following Lev Gumilev, he identified them as the Khazars¹⁴) and the Jews, the Westernisers (557–558). Indeed, above all, Dugin ascribed “Eastern psychological type” to the former and believed (in contrast to well-established facts) that it was from them that the Marxist revolutionaries were recruited.¹⁵ It was unclear which particular approach Dugin favoured himself.

Dugin’s method is based on allegedly everlasting “metaphysical dogmas” and “inborn psycho-mental directions (psycho-genetic factor).” That is why he needs no empirical studies. Indeed, his method allows him to know everything ahead—one has to understand the “transcendent principle,” and the Truth would appear. Therefore, Dugin is not interested in particular persons, only ‘races’ and ‘ethnoi’ make sense, because, in his view, they are bearers of particular ideologies. Hence, he arrives at a conclusion about an opposition and incompatibility of the “Semitic (Lunar) mentality” with its “creationism” and “Indo-European (Solar) outlook” with its “manifestationism” (Dugin 2005: 155–168).¹⁶ Dugin discovers the latter among the “yellow race” and explains this with a reference to the “traces of the early impact of the Aryan people.” In his view, “manifestationism has a monopoly to the Truth,” and “creationism” permanently disputes this and, thus, occupies itself with an undermining activity. It is noteworthy that in the course of the further “investigations” Dugin discovers that [Russian] Orthodoxy can be associated neither with “creationism,” nor with “manifestationism.” One is curious how it fits the desired Truth, but Dugin declines to ask this question.

To explain an inconsistency of the scheme in question, Dugin claims that esoteric organisations of the opposite type exist within each worldview complex. Yet, he proves to be less interested in why they emerged and how they fit the pattern as a whole. To put it differently, his complex speculative scheme is a fantasy of the armchair thinker, who is far removed from real life. It cannot explain anything, and any attempts to co-ordinate the armchair constructs with true facts lead one to numerous contradictions. In particular, Dugin does not explain how the former Jew Paul (with his “creationist orientation”) could develop Christianity as “Aryan in spirit.” And why have the “Aryan descendants,”

14 For the Khazar myth, see Shnirelman 2002.

15 He acknowledged that he borrowed this idea from M. Agursky (1980). For quite other reasons for the Jews to take part in all the Russian revolutions of the early twentieth century, see Deich 1925.

16 Evidently this is a reproduction of the well-known fascist and neo-fascist myths (Del Boca and Giovana 1969: 86).

who were close to Rome, chosen “creationist direction” (Catholicism is viewed by Dugin as “Judaized Christianity”) whereas their Orthodox descendants chose the “manifestationist one”? And how could the “Jewish Kabbalists” be baptised? Did they become “Aryans” as a result? How did the “psycho-genetic factor” work in all these cases? Dugin never asks any of these questions. What is important to him is to prove that there is a struggle between the creationist “Order of the Dead Head” and manifestationist “Order of the Living Heart” as a “humanist rationality” against an “emotionality of heart” (Dugin 2005: 188–193). He associates himself with the latter. And history in his presentation looks an eternal struggle between the Aryans and the Jews, “manifestationism against creationism, or the Solar paradigm against the Lunar one.” In fact, he is interested in myth rather than in history. That is why he does not fail to use fakes, such as the notorious “Ura Linda Chronicle” of Hermann Wirth.¹⁷ And that is why he is obsessed with the “Polar Homeland of the humanity,”¹⁸ which is not acknowledged by any contemporary specialist.

In 1995, Dugin completed an essay, “Order of Iliah,” where he restored an obsolete idea of allegedly entirely opposite nature of the Semitic nomads and sedentary Indo-Europeans (he even used the obsolete term “Indo-European race”) (Dugin 2005: 220–246). However, it is well established that early Indo-Iranians and Iranians (Scythians and Sarmatians) were nomadic pastoralists, as were the Indo-Aryans, who arrived in India. Dugin has failed to consider this because otherwise an obsolete opposition of “Semites vs Indo-Europeans” proved to be incorrect and irrelevant. It is noteworthy that he presented this scheme as a result of his own intensive intellectual work although one dealt with a restoration of ideas that were popular at the dawn of scholarship but thrown away later on.

Dugin ascribed to ‘Jews’ an aspiration to introduce the ‘New World Order’, that is, a “Jewish dictatorship over the ‘Goyim peoples’” as though this was a goal of the ‘Order of the Dead Head’. Allegedly nowadays this agent put a heavy pressure on “Hellenic-Aryan Christianity.” That is why, in Dugin’s view, nowadays chaos, which demonstrated a will to resistance, was preferable in contrast to order. He called for a “new crusade,” a revolt of the “Solar forces” against the “Lunar usurpers.” He maintained:

This will be a great movement of the forces of spiritual North against a civilization of South, a sacred war of the Cross-bearing Hearts against ‘smart heads’ of the Jews and Saracens, a battle for a seizer of the Holy Land and Holy Sepulcher from those, who through their material liking and claims

¹⁷ For this fake see Jacob-Friesen 1934, Mulot 1990, Mosionzhik 2012: 94–99.

¹⁸ For this myth, see Godwin 1993; Shnirelman 2014.

for national-religious exceptionality have challenged ethic of Victim and Heroism, the Aryan ethic of Love and Loyalty, Honesty and Justice.

DUGIN 2005: 216.

To put it briefly, although sometimes Dugin corrects his views, one point never changes, which is his hatred of liberalism and democracy. And today he calls for a crusade against the USA and the West, and it is not just an ideological struggle, which he has in mind; indeed, he claims that in order to win one has to “erase from the Earth the spiritual and physical areas, where the world heresy has emerged” (Dugin 2014: 101).

It is also worth noting that among the most important ideologies highlighted by Dugin it is an “absolute Right” including Nazism, which he admires most of all. And he lists Hitler among “historical heroes,” “bearers of a deep Objectivity.” It is no accident that Dugin highly respects Julius Evola, one of the fathers of European neo-fascism, and is fascinated with another Italian neo-fascist, Claudio Mutti. It is also no accident that he admires the swastika as allegedly one of the “preferable symbols of the Christian tradition.” Finally, twenty years ago he justified racism as a “doctrine, which approves natural, evident and omnipresent inequality” (Dugin 2005: 337). Today, after a new turnabout, he rejects racism, yet he associates it mainly with the USA and Europe as he did earlier (Dugin 2014: 51–53).¹⁹

Dugin claimed that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was the result of yet another plot, although in this case he used a geopolitical rather than an esoteric approach, and he pointed not to the North vs South confrontation, but to the West against the East,²⁰ a “marine civilisation” against a “terrestrial one,” “Atlanticism” against “Eurasianism.” He did not explain how esoteric and geopolitical plots could fit together. Instead, he blamed experts for their “ignorance.” After certain Western conspiracy theorists (Barkun 2003: 65–67) he monotonously listed such conspiratorial “mondialist” organisations as the Club of Rome, Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg Group, Trilateral Commission, and the like (Dugin 2005: 319–323, 346–351). The USA, with their allegedly endemic Russophobia, appear to be the core of all these organisations. For Dugin, Russophobia is an extension of some evangelical eschatological views, which present the Americans as the closest relatives and allies of the Israelis and claim that they are scarred with an expected assault from Russia by “Gog’s people” (Dugin 2005: 381).²¹

19 For his own racism, see Shnirelman 2011, 2: 218–227.

20 Dugin uses these definitions with a symbolic rather than geographic meaning, because sometimes he identifies the West with the “North” and unites Eurasia with the “South.”

21 In this he follows S.M. Hammel’s thesis 2000.

4 America, the Antichrist

It seems that by the time of writing the referred article, that is, by the late 1990s, Dugin had forgotten the confrontation between creationism and manifestationism, the Aryans and the Semites. Indeed, it is difficult to co-ordinate an esoteric approach with a geopolitical one, it is also impossible to relate the Aryan unity to an opposition of 'Sea' and 'Land', and religious conflicts can be hardly restricted by rigid geographical or political borders. Moreover, a universal break between 'Sea' and 'Land' is related by Dugin to relationships only between West (USA and Western Europe) and Eurasia (Russia). There is no room there for other countries and continents, and Dugin's less effective attempts to provide them with such room reveal a poverty of his reductionist approach.

Nonetheless, now it is America, which Dugin called the "Western Antichrist." He predicted—allegedly—an inevitable clash between it and Russia, which would be caused by eschatological reasons and Messianic goals (Dugin 2005: 355–368). Thus, in his view, an idea of the end times has to be the basis of contemporary world politics. Yet, it is the 'neocons' who run American world politics, that is, a small but a very influential group of high-status Americans of Jewish origin. So, Dugin's thoughtful reflections lead him to conclude that the major 'enemies' appear to be the same Jews, who are building up the Kingdom of Antichrist. He fails to mention only one point, namely, that the great majority of the American Jews by no means share the neocons' views.

More recently, Dugin has become fascinated with Byzantium as an ideal "millennial Christian Kingdom." Now he emphasises his loyalty to Russian Orthodoxy, yet, like Sergei Nilus, fills it with a mystic content and identifies Russia with the *katechon* as though Holy Rus' appears to be the "last home of *katechon*." And he calls for a preparation for the Last Coming (Dugin n. d.).

Why does Dugin develop his evidently inconsistent concepts without any attempts to avoid contradictions? We can hardly refer to his inability to follow logical reasoning. Instead, there is a more appropriate explanation. Indeed, Dugin is an ideologist rather than a scholar. And his ambition is to stir up deserved emotions in the general public. All means are appropriate for this end because creating fears seems much more important than any logic (Shekhovtsov 2009a; 2009b; Engström 2014: 358–360, 367).

It is noteworthy that Dugin was an advisor to the Russian State Duma speaker Gennadii Seleznev in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and became a head of the center for geopolitical expertise at the Duma's Advisory Council on National Security supervised by the LDPR of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. From March 2012 he was a member of the Expert-Consulting Committee serving the then State Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin. Evidently, conspiracy theories are in

demand among Russian authorities. Meanwhile, the illusory world to which Dugin invites his followers brings about failures at the international arena, if politicians blindly follow his advice (Barbashin and Thoburn 2014; Clover 2016: 17, 307–308, 330).²²

That esoteric and conspiratorial anti-Semitism is embedded in Dugin's concepts (for this, also see Laruelle 2008: 135–138) is no accident. A trend to explain the dissolution of the USSR with a reference to a 'secret plot' and to accuse 'International Jews' for that is an intrinsic characteristic of the Russian school of conspiracism. In the 1990s this was one of the major reasons for the Russian nationalists and communists to unite within a well-known national-patriotic "red-brown" movement, an active member of which was Dugin with *Elementy*. Anti-Semitism was embedded into their ideology of the 'Third way',²³ aimed against an 'International financial capital' as though it followed instructions of the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Matil 2007: 87–89). Today Dugin shares a so-called civilisational approach and claims that the conflict of civilisations is inevitable (Neef 2014). Indeed, this idea is very much characteristic of contemporary Russian conspiracy science, where the *Protocols* enjoy high respect (Hagemeister, this volume).

5 Conclusion

Thus, the case in question shows that, first, conspiracy is actually an extension of eschatology and proves to be its contemporary, secularised version, and, second, as a result, it demands an image of the enemy and is tirelessly searching for it. Yet, whereas eschatology can be satisfied with an obscure image of the enemy presented as some 'Dark Forces', conspiracy demands an image of more definite enemies, such as particular races, ethnic and social groups, as well as some particular persons or organisations. In this context, the Jews are ascribed a special role. Within popular versions of eschatology they are presented as reliable adherents of the Antichrist who make preparations for his arrival. That is why they allegedly aspire to eliminate national states and cultural traditions, to establish the world government and to introduce a uniform world religion. All this follows the logic of the end times as it was narrated by St. John the Divine.

²² At the same time, as Marlene Laruelle acknowledges, "Dugin's theories are not the direct inspiration for Putin's regime." See Laruelle 2015b: xiii.

²³ Yet, since 2007, Dugin associates himself with an idea of the 'Fourth way', allegedly different from communism, fascism, and liberalism. He borrowed this idea (as many others) from Alain de Benoist.

Conspiracy lacks a figure of the Antichrist but maintains a belief in the ominous role of the Jews. Hence, it demands for a replacement of the logic of eschatology by a new one. It is for this end that it badly needs an essentialist approach, which views racial and ethnic groups as well defined bodies with well-established, rigid boundaries. Allegedly they enjoy not only particular cultures but also particular ideologies or outlooks and have special missions in this world. As the Jews appear to be adherents of Judaism, some conspiracy theorists do all their best to find there a driving force for any of their activity as well as an explanation of their mission. Moreover, it is from this point that they view various Christian congregations and ascribe evil motives to those that, in their minds, move to a compromise with Judaism. Hence, there is a demonisation of Catholicism and Protestantism together with the West in general, which is an evident characteristic of Russian eschatology.

Yet, a role of the Jews looks even more ominous in conspiracy than in eschatology. Indeed, in eschatology they play a subsidiary role as the Antichrist's assistants, and they can even revolt against him and be baptised. By contrast, conspiracy provides them with an independent role as the masters, who establish their rule over the world and enslave all other peoples. In this context the Jews themselves appear to be a collective Antichrist. The more heroic and admirable are those who stand against this 'world evil'. This role is granted to the ethnic Russians in the Russian conspiracy theories. Whereas Russian eschatology identifies them or Russia in general with a *katechon*, this term is usually not used by the Russian conspiracy authors, but a function of a resistance against the 'world evil' is alive. One can find all of this in Dugin's concepts, which are interesting in that they make a bridge between eschatology and conspiracy. Indeed, it is less easy to find traces of eschatology in the works of many other Russian conspiracy authors. Yet an analysis of this vast literature is out of the scope of the present chapter.

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